

you see in this building. On the other hand, we also see people who say, "I'd like to go back in, Mr. President." What we're doing is the right thing, because many of these troops understand that by defeating the enemy there, we don't have to face them here. And they understand that by helping a country in the Middle East become a democracy, we are, in fact, laying the foundation for future peace. And my—as the Commander in Chief, I am resolved to make sure that those who have died in combats' sacrifice are not in vain. And I am resolved to make sure that these kids who are recovering here, that have suffered terrible injury, that their injuries are not in vain by completing the mission and laying that foundation for peace for generations to come. And I'm optimistic we'll achieve that objective.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. at the Brooke Army Medical Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

### **Remarks Following a Meeting on the PATRIOT Act**

*January 3, 2006*

Earlier today, I spoke to Governor Manchin of West Virginia. I told him that Americans all across our country were praying for the miners who are trapped in the mine there in West Virginia. I told him that I appreciated the great outpouring of compassion from the West Virginia citizens toward those worried family members. I also assured him that the Federal Government will help the folks in West Virginia any way we can to bring those miners out of that mine, hopefully in good condition. And may God bless those who are trapped below the Earth, and may God bless those who are concerned about those trapped below the Earth.

I also have just met with folks on the front-line of fighting the war on terror. U.S. Attorneys from around the country have joined us. Folks from the FBI, whose job it is to protect the American people, are with us as well.

We're talking about the PATRIOT Act and how useful the PATRIOT Act has been to

safeguard America and, at the same time, safeguard liberties of Americans. And yet, the PATRIOT Act is going to expire in 30 days. And these good folks, whose task it is to do everything they can to protect the American people from a terrorist enemy that wants to hit us again, is asking the United States Congress to give them the tools necessary to do their jobs. And I'm asking the Congress to do so as well.

The American people expect to be protected, and the PATRIOT Act is a really important tool for them to stay protected. You know, the Congress says to people in the administration, "How come you haven't connected the dots?" And the PATRIOT Act is an important way to help connect the dots to protect the people.

This PATRIOT Act was passed overwhelmingly by the United States Congress in 2001. Members from both parties came together and said, "We will give those on the frontline of protecting America the tools necessary to protect American citizens, and at the same time, guard the civil liberties of our citizens." For 4 years, that's what's happened. These good folks have used the PATRIOT Act to protect America. There's oversight on this important program. And now, when it came time to renew the act, for partisan reasons, in my mind, people have not stepped up and have agreed that it's still necessary to protect the country. The enemy has not gone away. They're still there. And I expect Congress to understand that we're still at war, and they've got to give us the tools necessary to win this war.

And so for the next 30 days, I look forward to working with Members of Congress and speaking to the American people as clearly as I can about the importance of renewing the PATRIOT Act.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:42 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Joe Manchin III of West Virginia. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Remarks on the War on Terror in  
Arlington, Virginia**

*January 4, 2006*

Today our Nation mourns those who lost their lives in the mining accident in West Virginia. We send our prayers and heartfelt condolences to the loved ones whose hearts are broken. We ask that the good Lord comfort them in their time of need.

I want to thank the Governor of West Virginia for showing such compassion, and I want to thank those who risked their lives to save those miners for showing such courage. May God bless the good people of West Virginia.

I just finished an important meeting, a briefing with members of my national security team, a briefing hosted by Secretary Don Rumsfeld and General Pete Pace. We spent time talking about this war on terror, the global war on terror. And to make sure that my team understood the progress we've made and the challenges ahead, the Secretary asked three of our commanders to join in the briefing, Generals Abizaid, Casey, and General Dempsey.

I want to tell the American people that I am most impressed by the caliber of these generals. They are smart. They are capable. They are visionary, and they're working hard to win this global war. We also were able to speak to one of our fine Ambassadors, Ambassador Khalilzad from Baghdad, as well.

During our briefing, we talked about the areas of concern in this global war on terror, recognizing that the enemy, which has an ideology of hate and a desire to kill, lurks in parts around the world. I assured those generals that this administration would do everything in our power to bring these enemies to justice.

We also spent time talking about the two major fronts in this war on terror, and that would be Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq, 2005 was a year of progress toward meeting our goal of victory. If you really think about it, there was three important elections that took place and in an atmosphere that some predicted wouldn't yield democracy. We had the January elections; we had the constitution elections; we had elections last December when nearly 11 million people defied the ter-

rorists to vote. The turnout in that country was 70 percent. Part of our strategy for defeating the enemy in Iraq is for there to be a viable political process. And when 70 percent of the people show up to vote, that's a good sign. See, people are saying, "I want to participate in the democratic process." The Iraqis showed great courage.

Now, we look forward to the process, obviously, moving on. The formation of a unity government is going to be important to the stability of the future of Iraq. Before that happens, obviously you've got to finish counting the votes. And that's going to happen over the next couple of weeks. And then the Government—well, they're beginning to form the Government under their new Constitution. It takes a two-third vote of the Parliament for certain top officials to assume office. And to form this inclusive government, the Iraqi leaders must compromise and negotiate and build consensus, and this is going to take some time.

What the American people will see during the weeks ahead is a political process unfold, that people will be making decisions not based upon who's got the biggest gun but who's got the capacity to rally the will of the people. And that's positive. Democracies are an important part of our winning the war on terror. Democracies yield an ideology that is based on an ideology that says people are free—free to choose. The ideology of the enemy says a few people will choose, and if you don't like what we tell you to believe in, we'll kill you or treat you harshly.

And I want the American people to remember what life was like for the poor people in Afghanistan under the Taliban. The Taliban had no hopeful vision. They're vision was, if you don't agree with us, we'll take you in the public square and whip you. They're vision was, women don't have rights. They're vision was a dark and dim vision, which stands in stark contrast to the vision based upon freedom and democracy.

The second part of our strategy is to—in Iraq, a strategy for victory, is to train the Iraqis so they can take the fight against the few who would stop the progress of many. And during this election, we were briefed about the security forces during the election. The commanders talked about more than